

What is claimed is:

- Sub C1*

1. A variant of a serine protease characterized by a modified amino acid sequence of a wild-type amino acid sequence, wherein the modified amino acid sequence comprises a deletion of one or more of positions 70 - 84 corresponding to subtilisin BPN', wherein the variant is not  $\Delta$  75 - 83 or  $\Delta$  71.
2. A variant according to Claim 1 wherein the serine protease is selected from the group consisting of subtilisin BPN', subtilisin Carlsberg, subtilisin DY, subtilisin 309, proteinase K, and thermitase.
3. A variant according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein the deletion is of one or more of positions 73 - 83 corresponding to subtilisin BPN'.
4. A variant according to any of the preceding claims wherein the deletion is of one or more of positions 70 and 75 - 82 corresponding to subtilisin BPN'.
5. A variant according to any of the preceding claims selected from the group consisting of:
  - (a)  $\Delta$  70, 75 - 82;
  - (b)  $\Delta$  75 - 82;
  - (c)  $\Delta$  70, 78, 79;
  - (d)  $\Delta$  70;
  - (e)  $\Delta$  75;
  - (f)  $\Delta$  76;
  - (g)  $\Delta$  78;
  - (h)  $\Delta$  79;
  - (i)  $\Delta$  81; and
  - (j)  $\Delta$  82.

6. A variant according to any of the preceding claims further comprising a substitution of one or more of positions 70 - 84 corresponding to subtilisin BPN'.
7. A variant according to any of the preceding claims further comprising one or more stabilizing mutations.
8. A mutant serine protease gene encoding a variant according to any of the preceding claims.
9. A personal care composition characterized by:
  - (a) a variant of a serine protease having a modified amino acid sequence of a wild-type amino acid sequence, wherein the modified amino acid sequence comprises a deletion of one or more of positions 70 - 84 corresponding to BPN'; and
  - (b) a personal care composition carrier.
10. A composition according to Claim 9 wherein the variant is further characterized by a substitution at one or more of positions 70 - 84 corresponding to subtilisin BPN'.

add

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